(d) whether Government are also aware that a Muslim Community of Bijapur had made representations that those arches should be made over to them as Muslim of Bijapur offer the Id Prayers at these places;

(e) if so, the steps Government propose to take to hand over the arches to Muslims of Bijapur ?

SRI AZEEZ SAIT (Minister for Industries and Commerce),—

(a) Yes

(b) The orders were subsequently modified by the Chief Minister that there is no question of returning the six arch rooms now occupied by the Police Department.

(c) It has been notified as a wakf by the Karnataka State Board of Wakfs.

(d) Yes

(e) Does not arise in view of answer to (b)

Statement by the Chief Minister

re : reduction of electricity benefit for irrigation pump sets

SRI D. DEVARAJ URS (Chief Minister).— Sir, I want to make a statement in connection with the electricity tariff particularly, for pump sets. In that connection Government have after reconsideration thought it fit in the interest of the farmers to reduce the rate of consumption of power on pumpsets. We would like to see that burden on the farmers is reduced inspite of the fact that the expenditure is going up particularly after the imposition of surcharge of 0-2 paise per unit of production. So, we have reduced the rate from 0-23 paise to 20 paise so far as pump sets are concerned. This is likely to reduce the income of the Board by about Rs. 125 lakhs i.e. 1·25 crores per year. On an uniform rate it will be reduced, but the slab remains the same.

ಶ್ರೀ ಎಸ್. ಆರ್. ಬೊಮ್ಮಾಯಿ.—ಮುಖ್ಯ ಮಂತ್ರಿಗಳವರು ನಮ್ಮೆಲ್ಲರ ಒಂದು ಬೇಡಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಕೈಗೂಡಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಅದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ನಾನು ಸ್ವಾಗತ ಮಾಡುತ್ತೇನೆ. ಆದರೆ ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿಗಳವರ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯಕ್ಕೆ ಒಂದು ವಿಷಯವನ್ನು ತರಬಯಸುತ್ತೇನೆ. ೧೯೭೭-೭೮ರಲ್ಲಿ ಎಲೆಕ್ಟ್ರಿಸಿಟಿ ಬೋರ್ಡಿನವರು ೮ ಕೋಟಿ ರೂಪಾಯಿಗಳ್ಷ್ಟು ಲಾಭ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

SRI D. DEVARAJ URS.—That will be wiped out by that surcharge at 0-2 paise per unit of production which comes to Rs. 13 crores. Further I would like to read the statement.

It has been represented to Government in this House as well as outside that the electricity tariff for irrigation pumpsets is high compared to the rates in other neighbouring States and that it should be reduced. I have examined the matter in some detail and would like to make a statement on the subject.

When the power tariff was revised in April this year a very substantial increase in the tariff was found necessary in order to meet the rising costs of operation and maintenance and the high cost of power purchased from other States. The average rise for all categories of consumers was of the order of 22% varying from as low as 1% for demostic lights and fans to about 51% for H. T. Industries. However. in view of the importance that the Government have always given to agriculture, no increase was made for irrigation pumpsets. In fact, the average rate for I. P. sets was actually 3.5% less than the previous average rate inclusive of the demand charge. It is also less by one paisa than the revised rate for L. T. industries. Further, I.P. sets attract the lowest rate of 1 Paisa per unit of electricity duty and are totally exempt from the Central Excise duty of 2 paise per unit.

In fixing the rate for I.P. sets at 23 paise per unit for the first 200 units per month, note has been taken of the fact that about 85% of the 2.6 lakhs I. P. sets in the State are of 5 H. P, and below with an average annual consumption of less than 1,400 units. The large majority of I.P. set owners. therefore, will be paying less than before. Only those who consumed substantially in excees of 1,500 units per year would be required to pay more than previously.

I have taken note of the demand that our power rates for I.P.sets should be comparable to the rates in the neighbouring States. In Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, the rate is, no doubt, lower than the rate in Karnataka but in Maharashtra, it is comparable being 22 paise per unit. It is not entirely correct to compare the rates of different States for a particular category of consumers, as each State has evolved its rate over a number of years having regard to the circumstances prevailing in that State ; but in all States the tariff for I. P. sets has considerable amount of built in subsidy. In Karnataka, it has been estimated that the cost of delivering energy to pumpsets in rural areas is of the order of 56 paise per unit, while the average rate of sale is about 23 paise.

Government, nevertheless, feel that there is force in the demand that the rate for agricultural pumpsets should be reduced. particularly when most of the neighbouring States have fixed lower rates, though some of them have hydel-cum-thermal generation. Government have come to the conclusion that tariff should be reduced by 3 paise - from 23 paise to 20 paise per unit for the first slab of 200 units per month